4.9 RECREATION

This section addresses a variety of offshore and onshore activities that could be potentially impacted by the Proposed Project. Recreational facilities and activities in the region are described. The influence of the Proposed Project on recreational activities is evaluated and the need for mitigation is discussed.

4.9.1 Environmental Setting

A large fraction of the U.S. population derives enjoyment from light, non-destructive, recreational use of natural and semi-natural areas, and this is particularly true in Santa Barbara County (Santa Barbara County 1994). The climate and the attractions of the mountains and the sea draw many people to the area.

4.9.1.1 Recreation Facilities

A wide range of public and private facilities is available for recreation in the vicinity of the PRC-421 pier remnant. Those nearest to the shore at PRC-421 have the potential to be affected by the Proposed Project. To provide a more complete picture of the recreational options in the area, facilities beyond the potential influence of the Proposed Project are also described.

Santa Barbara County Facilities

The Santa Barbara County Parks Department operates several beach and inland parks. In the western Goleta Valley, within a few miles of the Proposed Project, there are five County Parks: Stow Grove, Lake Los Carneros, Goleta Beach, Isla Vista, and Santa Barbara Shores. Each is described below:

Stow Grove County Park. This park is located inland about a mile (1.6 km) north of the Santa Barbara Municipal Airport and is about 2.5 miles (4.0 km) from the ocean and 4 miles (6.4 km) northwest of the project site. It has a picnic area in a grove of California coast redwoods, barbecue grills, volleyball courts, ball fields, and hiking trails.

Lake Los Carneros County Park. This inland park is much larger than Stow Grove and is just south of Stow Grove. Centered on a small lake, there are picnic areas with barbecues, as well as hiking, equestrian, and biking trails. The Stow House Museum and the South Coast Railroad Museum (in the old Goleta Depot) are also on the grounds.

Goleta Beach County Park. Two points of land, Coal Oil Point and Goleta Point, separate this park from the project area, which is 4.5 miles (6.4 km) to the east. The mile-long park consists of the beach backed by a grassy area with picnic tables and barbecues. There are also a long fishing pier, areas for volleyball, horseshoes, and a playground.

Isla Vista County (Sea Lookout) Park. This small, neighborhood park is located on the bluff between Coal Oil Point and Goleta Point. It contains picnic tables, a volleyball court, and overlooks the ocean.

Santa Barbara Shores County Park. This large, 118 acre, undeveloped park consists of open space and thick eucalyptus groves, and is located just west of the Sandpiper Golf Course. There are hiking and biking trails through the park and along the coastal bluffs. While the southern portion of the park overlooks the ocean and the southwestern corner of the park is just a half-mile (0.8 km) from the project site, the PRC-421 pier remnant is "around the corner" (a slight bend in the coastline) and is not visible from the park.

University of California at Santa Barbara

The University of California at Santa Barbara (UCSB) is located about 3.5 miles (5.6 km) east of the project area. The campus has a wide range of recreational facilities typical of a major university. These facilities are primarily available to the students of the University.

Golf Courses

Two public golf courses are located in the southwestern Goleta area. They are:

Ocean Meadow Golf Course. This 9-hole public golf course is located inland from the Devereaux Lagoon, about 1.5 miles (2.4 km) east of the project site.

Sandpiper Golf Course. Sandpiper is a public, 18-hole, championship golf course located above the bluff immediately adjacent to the project site. Ocean views from the course include the existing PRC-421 pier remnant.

Bacara Resort and Spa

The Bacara Resort and Spa, located about ½ mile (0.8 km) west of Sandpiper Golf Course and less than 1 mile (1.6 km) from the project site, opened in the Fall of 2000. This luxury facility has over 350 rooms, tennis courts, swimming pools, spa, and other organized activities.

4.9.1.2 California State Parks

The California State Park system includes coastal locations that may potentially be affected by nearshore projects. There are four State parks along the Santa Barbara County coast of the Santa Barbara Channel. Carpinteria State Beach (22 miles [35.4 km] to the east) and Gaviota State Park (17.5 miles [28 km] to the west) are the most remote from the project site. The remaining two, El Capitán State Beach and Refugio State Beach, are described below:

El Capitán State Beach. This park is located about 6.5 miles (10.5 km) up the coast (west) of the project site. It includes a sandy beach, rocky tidepools, and stands of sycamore

and oaks along El Capitán Creek. There are facilities for camping and picnicking, as well as hiking and biking trails. Beach activities include swimming, surfing, and fishing.

Refugio State Beach. Located 2.5 miles (4 km) west of El Capitán State Beach, Refugio also offers camping and picnicking, trails, and similar beach activities.

4.9.1.3 Harbors

Santa Barbara Harbor, located approximately 12.5 miles (20 km) east of the project site, accommodates a variety of private and commercial vessels, as well as marine associated businesses and restaurants. It is home to the Santa Barbara Yacht Club, which was formed in 1872. Both commercial fishing and charter fishing boats operate from the Harbor. Whale watching and dive boats cruises are also available. The Harbor was created by construction of a breakwater that was completed in 1930.

4.9.1.4 Recreation Activities

Most of the recreational activities along the shore are water-related or dependant. To accommodate the *California Coastal Act* requirement that coastal areas suited for water-oriented recreational activities be protected for such uses, the *Santa Barbara County Coastal Plan* defines the following:

- Coastal dependent recreation - Activities that require a coastal location, e.g., ocean swimming, surfing, SCUBA diving, fishing, boating, beach activities, and nature study; and
- Coastal related recreation - Coastal activities that also occur inland, e.g., off-road vehicles, picnicking, bicycling, walking, jogging, and camping.

These activities may occur in areas set aside for the public, such as the parks described above, or they may occur in any area accessible to the public. In addition to the specific private and government owned/operated facilities described above, privately owned, undeveloped open space areas exist along the coast in the Ellwood area. The public historically has used numerous trails through these properties to gain access to the beach. It should be noted that property owners do not authorize this access. Offshore recreational activities include boating and sportfishing.

Beach activities. Most of the beach activities in the area occur in or near organized parks, especially at Goleta Beach County Park and adjacent beaches near UCSB. These activities include walking, jogging, sunbathing, surfing, swimming, and beachcombing. Beach access is limited in the vicinity of Sandpiper Golf Course so the number of people that use the beach closest to PRC-421 is low.

Surfing. The shoreline shape is conducive to producing surfing waves off Coal Oil Point and Goleta Point, near UCSB. While surfing is popular near these Points, it is essentially non-existent along the relatively straight shoreline in the vicinity of PRC-421. Some limited surfing

does occur in the vicinity of the Ellwood Pier and Haskell's Beach (fronting the Bacara Resort) approximately 1 mile (1.6 km) and ½ mile (0.8 km) to the west.

Boating. Since the area is a considerable distance from the Santa Barbara Harbor, recreational boating activity in the immediate project area is minimal. However, boating activity within potential view of the project site includes whale watching and sight seeing excursions to the Channel Islands emanating out of Santa Barbara Harbor.

Jetskiing. Jet ski use in the area is minimal because of the distance between the project area and the nearest harbor and boat launch

Fishing. Due to the known presence of oil seeps, the area is not considered a prime destination for commercial sportfishing. Most sportfishing in the area is conducted at Naples Reef, located approximately 2.5 miles (4 km) west of Pier PRC-421 (Mobil 1997). Surf fishing (from shore) may also occur in the area, but it is not common.

SCUBA Diving. While diving is possible anywhere along the coast, areas of rocky benthic habitat are most popular. Naples Reef, west of the project area, is frequented by divers in addition to the fishermen noted above.

Camping. Overnight camping facilities are available at the parks mentioned above. Camping includes the use of trailers and recreational vehicles.

4.9.1.5 Applicable Plans and Policies

Use of recreation areas falls under a variety of local, State, and federal plans. Policies and regulations incorporated in these plans may range from preservation of scenic values to actual use of environmental resources. Examples of these plans include the *Goleta Community Plan*, the *Santa Barbara County Coastal Plan*, the *California Coastal Act*, and the *Coastal Zone Management Act*. The city of Goleta is in the process of developing its General Plan which will ultimately include goals and policies relating to the recreational areas and uses within the City's jurisdiction.

4.9.2 Impacts and Mitigation Measures

The Proposed Project is located in an area in which active and passive recreational activities occur. Due to the nature of the proposed operations, short-term restrictions on recreation activities will be required to protect the public from project activities. This section assesses these current recreational activities in the area to determine if additional mitigation measures are required to reduce impacts to such activities. This section also evaluates the long-term impact of the Proposed Project on recreation.

4.9.2.1 Methodology

Both short-term and long-term potential impacts of the Proposed Project were evaluated in light of the goals of the applicable governmental plans and policies.

4.9.2.2 Significance Criteria

Recreational impacts are considered significant if they cause interference with coastal access, recreational facilities, or recreational use. For example, if the recreational public abandons a site because of project-related impacts, this would be significant. If a recreational resource becomes degraded because of project-related impacts, this would also be considered to be significant.

4.9.2.3 Recreation Impacts

Short-term Impacts. The following are the potential short-term impacts of Proposed Project.

REC-1: Effects of the proximity of pier removal and roosting/nesting platform construction to onshore and nearshore activities.

Discussion:

The large barges used to dismantle the pier remnant and install the proposed roosting/ nesting platforms will be stationed at the end of the structure, 850 ft from shore. The Project will have no physical presence on the beach. People on the beach and from some view points on the bluffs, including the Ellwood Shores area, Sandpiper Golf Course and Bacara Resort will be able to see the vessels (see assessment of aesthetic impacts in Section 4.7) and may be able to hear various pier removal and roosting/nesting platform construction activities (see assessment of noise impacts in Section 4.6. This will not prevent people from continuing any of their beach and other onshore activities.

The public, either on the beach, swimming or surfing, e.g., at Haskell's Beach, 1/2 mile (0.8 km) away, will not be at risk during the planned operational use of explosives due to the distance of these operations. The closest vessel position, with respect to the shoreline, will occur during the setting and retrieval of the inshore anchors for the Load Line Barge and will be approximately 400 feet (122 m) and just inside the 20-foot (6-m) depth isoline (Lorenz, pers. com. January 2003). This operation would be performed by a tug/anchor handling vessel.

Impact/Mitigation:

The short-term impact of the Proposed Project on people using the beaches and other onshore recreational activities may be adverse, but is not significant (Class 3). Therefore, no mitigation is required.

REC-2: Effects of pier removal and roosting/nesting platform construction on boaters.

Discussion:

The existing pier remnant is an existing nearshore obstacle that boaters traveling along the coast have to avoid. During the estimated 26 day period of removal and construction, the presence of the work vessels represents additional obstacles to be avoided. Avoidance of the

structure and the vessels will not be difficult, due to the high visibility of the vessels involved and the proximity to shore.

The U.S. Coast Guard will be contacted so that project information can be included in the Local Notice to Mariners to advise boaters that could potentially pass near the area of the activity.

Impact/Mitigation:

The short-term impact is not significant (Class 3). Therefore, no mitigation is required.

REC-3: Effects of excluding other uses during pier removal and roosting/nesting platform construction.

Discussion:

Two possible public activities in the vicinity of the pier remnant are fishing and diving, although the area and the pier are not presently considered to be attractive sites for either of these activities. There are much better locations with better access and/or more satisfactory experience for these activities within a few miles of the project. During the pier removal and roosting/nesting platform construction work, the public e.g., fishermen and divers would have to be excluded from the area for safety concerns (the use of heavy equipment and blasting).

The U.S. Coast Guard will be contacted so that project information can be included in the Local Notice to Mariners to advise fishermen and divers that might potentially plan to use the area.

Impact/Mitigation:

The short-term impact is not significant (Class 3). Therefore, no mitigation is required.

Long-term Impacts. The following are the potential long-term impacts of the Proposed Project.

REC-4: Effects of proximity of pier removal and roosting/nesting platforms on onshore activities.

Discussion:

After the Proposed Project is completed, the four proposed seabird roosting/nesting platforms will occupy the viewshed that previously included the PRC-421 pier remnant. This change in the visual condition of the project site is not a significant visual impact. Therefore, impacts to onshore recreational uses associated with views from local public and private recreational areas, e.g., beaches, golf course and resort, is also considered less than significant. The fact that the new structures are specifically intended for use by local seabirds may actually be a point of interest for individuals engaging in recreational or educational activities within view of the project site.

As discussed in Section 4.1, Geology and Coastal Processes, the Proposed Project would introduce a hardbottom substrate mound that would influence the wave regime, coastal currents and sediment transport within the project vicinity. The Proposed Project would result in alterations to the nearshore sediment drift and beaches. However, the effect is not considered significant in comparison to the existing conditions under which seasonal beach width variation is on the magnitude of 50 feet (15 m) with periods where the beach sand is removed down to a resistant rock and cobble substrate.

Impact/Mitigation:

The Projects impact on onshore activities over the long-term is not considered significant (Class 3). Therefore, no mitigation is required.

REC-5: Effects of pier removal and roosting/nesting platforms construction on boaters.

Discussion:

The existing pier remnant is a nearshore obstacle that boaters traveling along the coast already have to avoid. The Proposed Project, after completion, will be less of a navigational hazard due to its smaller footprint and separation from shore.

As discussed in Section 4.1, Geology and Coastal Processes, the Proposed Project would introduce a hardbottom substrate mound that would influence the wave regime, coastal currents and sediment transport within the project vicinity. The effect of the project on nearshore currents would be limited to a small area in the project vicinity. The along-shore and cross-shore currents would decrease by no more than 16 percent within the wave shelter zone. Current velocities within the area of elevated wave height, immediately upcoast and downcoast of the proposed hardbottom substrate mound, are not expected to exceed 15 percent. These variations should not substantially impact boaters.

According to the U.S. Coast Guard, current regulations require that offshore structures depending upon their location and other factors include aides to navigation, e.g., lights, buoys and beacons. However, considering the shallow depth, and the light boat traffic in the project vicinity, and the fact that the existing obstruction (pier remnant) was not lighted, the Coast Guard sees no need to require aids to navigation for the proposed roosting/nesting platforms (Aldrich, pers. com. January 2004).

Impact/Mitigation:

There will not be a significant impact to boaters (Class 3). Therefore, no mitigation is required. Although, this impact would not be significant, the following measure will be implemented.

Mitigation Measure REC-5:

- After completion of the Proposed Project, the U.S. Coast Guard will be contacted so that boaters may be advised, through the Local Notice to Mariners, that the construction hazard is no longer present, but a new permanent nearshore object is present.

REC-6: Potential effects on waves and surfing.

Discussion:

A detailed discussion of waves is found in Section 4.1.1.3-Currents and Sediment Movement. Although the open nature of the PRC-421 pier remnants represents only a diffuse obstacle to oncoming waves, it is probable that the energy of the waves is nevertheless somewhat lessened in the immediate vicinity. As discussed in Section 4.1, Geology and Coastal Processes, the Proposed Project would introduce a hardbottom substrate mound that would influence the wave regime, coastal currents and sediment transport within the project vicinity. The proposed introduction of a relatively small area of hardbottom substrate to the project area will result in relatively small changes to the incident sea and swell energy that will pass over and near the submerged mound. Refraction, diffraction, and shoaling effects due to the localized and shallow depth of the quarry rock are estimated to result in some sheltering effects inshore of the structure and slight increases in wave height within relatively narrow zones immediately upcoast and downcoast of the proposed hardbottom substrate mound location.

Because of the nearly unidirectional (westerly) approach of the sea and swell in the central Santa Barbara Channel, the limits of the wave shelter zone influenced by the submerged mound are estimated to be mostly confined within about 395 feet (120 meters) of surf zone area immediately inshore and downcoast of PRC-421. The narrow zones of elevated wave height that are predicted to occur on either side of the mound are estimated to result in slightly higher surf conditions in those areas. The predicted changes to the local wave climate are estimated to be within five percent of existing conditions.

Impact/Mitigation:

As the impact of the Proposed Project on the nearshore wave climate limited in nature and is not expected to substantially alter the recreational opportunities or quality of recreational experiences, the effects on recreational waves and surfing are considered to be beneficial (Class 4).

REC-7: Potential effects on fishing and diving.

Discussion:

The installation of the proposed roosting/nesting platforms is not anticipated to create any measurable improvement in recreational fishing or diving. However, the installation of hard rock substrate to the site would provide an environment for the recruitment of marine vegetation and sea life (see the Biological Resources Section of this EIR, 4.4) which could benefit recreational fishing and diving.

Impact/Mitigation:

The overall impact of the Proposed Project on recreational fishing and diving could be beneficial (Class 4).

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